

## "Sins of the Heart"

The Lord said, "The heart is more deceitful than all else" (Jeremiah 17:9). A deceitful heart can easily lead us into sin. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we examine the sins of the heart. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We're examining God's diagnosis of man's most serious problem that leads to sin and God's solution to that problem. God is honest with people about sin, but He's also gracious to forgive us and to give us a new way of life. The Scriptures help us understand the serious challenge that sin presents to our souls, our lives, and our destinies. Proverbs 3 and verse 5 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding." Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

The great threat to our souls is sin, and the great source of sin is selfishness. When people put themselves first and forget God and others, they usually find themselves in sin. 1 John 2:15 to 17 says, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever." Yes, each of these points to a heart that focuses on self and what I want.

When people neglect God and begin looking for other things to fill their lives, they lead themselves in the wrong direction. And people who stop worshiping with the church, stop praying, and stop reading Scripture, they find their hearts spiritually empty and weak to sin. And this is why we urge everyone to strengthen their spiritual lives by worshiping at church, studying Scripture, and praying each day. The best response to temptation is to pray and fill our hearts with God's word.

Now we offer this study free, on the sins of the heart. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Galatians 5:19 to 24, and explore the sins of the heart.

Our reading today comes from Paul's epistle to the Galatians, chapter 5, verses 19 to 24. And focuses on the contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit. "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I've forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." And I hope that you are thinking about following the fruit of the spirit instead of the works of the flesh.

Let's pray together. "Oh Father, help us to guard against the sins of the heart, to not deceive ourselves, and to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen."

The first step into sin focuses on our desires and ignores God. When people forget God and what great things God has done for us, they cease to honor Him and to thank Him. Paul described in Romans 1:21 to 23 the things led to paganism and idolatry in ancient times: “For even though they knew God, they didn’t honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”

One who’s not thankful to God for His blessings and kindnesses may turn to cynicism, grumbling, and complaining. Philippians 2:14 simply says, “Do all things without grumbling and disputing.” Now, Paul didn’t want them to complain endlessly and fuss about their lives. Complaining means that we’ve forgotten to count our blessings. I’ve seen poor people who were happy in life, because they were thankful to God for what they had, and I’ve seen wealthy people who were never happy, because they didn’t have everything they wanted. And when we look into 1 Corinthians 10 and verse 10, it reminds us that greed can be a problem.

Second, arrogance is the attitude of exalting oneself so that one is better than others. The Lord God spoke of how offensive an arrogant person is in Isaiah 65 and verse 5: They are those “Who say, ‘Keep to yourself, do not come near me, For I am holier than you!’ These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day.” You’ve likely been around a campfire where the smoke seems to follow you. It gets in your eyes and nostrils! And it’s offensive; well so is the arrogant person who thinks he is holier than others or better than others.

God calls haughty eyes an abomination in Proverbs 6 and verse 16 and 17, because they show an arrogant pride that puts down others and sometimes puts down God himself. Haughty eyes presume they can do evil and get away with it. Haughty presumes and thinks the rules don’t apply to them. Haughty people think they are above criticism. Proverbs 8:13 says, “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate.”

Proverbs 11, verse 2 says, “When pride comes, then comes dishonor.” And insolent pride breeds strife and causes quarrels (Proverbs 13:10). Proverbs 16:5 says, that “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; And assuredly, he will not be unpunished.” Again, Proverbs 16:18 says, that “Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.” 1 Peter 5 and verse 5 cautions us, “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Third, coveting is an improper desire for more. God’s law said in Deuteronomy 5:21, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” To covet means to desire or crave the property of another, and then they do it to a fault, they do it detrimentally, they do it to such a situation that they long for it and want to take it. Ephesians 5 and verse 5 says that a covetous person is really an idolater and has no inheritance in the kingdom of God.

James 4:1 to 4 says, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and you don’t have; so you commit murder. You’re envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You don’t have because you don’t ask. You ask and don’t receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. (And then he said) You adulteresses, don’t you know that friendship with the world is

hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Now when a person becomes selfish and then hurtful to others, he also becomes a lover of the world and an enemy of God.

Fourth, greed or the love of money can cause sin and heartache. 1 Timothy 6 and verse 10 says, "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." People who love money are never satisfied with what they have. Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 5, verses 10 to 11, that "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. Oh, this too is vanity. When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what is the advantage to their owners except to look on?" The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6 and verse 24, that "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money (or mammon)." In fact, Colossians 3 and verse 5 says that covetousness or greed "amounts to idolatry."

Luke 12, verses 13 to 21 tells of a man who loved his possessions: And someone in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." But He said to him, "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" And then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 'And he began reasoning to himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 'Then he said, "This is what I will do: I'll tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I'll store all my grain and my goods." And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry." "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Fifth, envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing the advantage or prosperity of others. Matthew 27 and verse 18 says that Pilate "knew that because of envy, the Jewish leaders handed Him over" to be crucified. Now envy can cause violence and desires to deprive another of what he possesses. Proverbs 23, verses 17 and 18 says, "Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the fear of the LORD always. Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off."

Do you remember how Cain killed Abel? Genesis 4:3 to 5 says, "So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain "and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell." John explains in 1 John 3:11 to 12, "For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil (that is Cain's were), and his brother Abel's were righteous."

Jacob favored Joseph over his brothers; and Genesis 37:4 says, that "His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; so they hated him and couldn't speak to him on friendly terms." Envy that grows in the heart causes the worst to come out in people and leads to heartache. Jacob didn't fully realize what loving Joseph more than his brothers was doing to Joseph's brothers.

Sixth, jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for oneself. Love is not jealous (1 Corinthians 13, verse 4). Jealousy and envy often lead to selfish ambition. James 3 and verses 13 to 16 says, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the

gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing." Now the Scriptures never speak anything good about selfish ambition.

And that's the seventh point, selfish ambition, which is a contentious struggle for personal profit or power, with no redeeming hint of service to others. Selfish ambition battles others for immediate gains and empty honors, which have no eternal value. A person who is selfishly ambitious will often step on others to make his way to the top. And he doesn't care about anyone but himself. Such people are hard to love and often very lonely. Selfish ambition leads to strife and contentiousness. Romans 2:6 to 8 says that God "will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, to them wrath and indignation."

Now it's much better to recognize there are things bigger than ourselves. As Christians we are to be servants of our Lord and servants of one another rather than arrogantly making ourselves better than others. Selfish ambition leads people to think only of themselves and regards everyone else as inferior. Philippians 2:3 to 4 says, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

We're to have the mind of Christ. The Lord Jesus emptied Himself and took the form of a bond-servant. "He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. And for this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2, verses 8 and 9). God will humble those who exalt themselves and will exalt those who humble themselves. So humble yourselves before the Lord.

Thankfully, God helps us to have good hearts, when we focus on Him and His word. Psalm 119, verses 1 and 2 says, "How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the LORD. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart." And like the psalmist we should say, "Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!" (Psalm 119:5). Later in verses 9 to 11 he observes: "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word have I treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You."

Now each day we choose whether we give our hearts to God or spend our time in selfish pursuits. We can allow the passions of our hearts to lead us into selfish pleasure or turn our hearts to the will of God. If you turn to selfish pleasure, in no time you'll be a slave to your own desires. Galatians 6, verses 7 to 8 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

Let's pray. "Heavenly Father, help us to sow to the spirit and not to the flesh, help us to live for You, and to love You, and to serve you every day of our lives. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen."

God asks us to think within our hearts about our choices. "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool." 'If you consent and obey, You'll eat the best of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword.' Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken" (Isaiah

1:18 to 20). What we choose to be, to say, and to do matters. We'll either follow the way of the Lord or the ways of the world. If we follow the world, we'll lose sight of God and end up with hardened hearts against Him.

And so, decide today, who you're going to follow. You don't have to obey sin; you can have a heart that loves and follows the Lord. When we give ourselves to God in obedience, God promises to give us new hearts. The Lord God said in Ezekiel 36:26, "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

When we obey the Lord, we will place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we'll repent of our sins, we'll confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and we'll be baptized (that is, immersed) in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins, just as they did in Acts chapter 2. When we're baptized, God will wash away our sins (Acts 22:16), He'll unite us with Christ, and give us newness of life (Romans 6:4 to 7). Won't you turn to the Lord today?

We hope today's study about the heart has been a blessing. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of our study, we're offering it free, just mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry", and then like what you see. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you draw close to God, and get to heaven.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, so keep searching God's Word with us. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.